

A CORRELATIONAL–COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OF GRADES 10 AND 11 STUDENTS AT MAIJA YANG HIGH SCHOOL, KACHIN STATE, MYANMAR

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation and their perception of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language and to compare each variable in each grade level at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar. The participants of this study were 265 students from Grades 10 and 11 at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar. This study was designed as a quantitative correlational-comparative study and an adapted version of Gardner's (2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used to collect data from 120 Grade 10 students and 145 Grade 11 students during the 2018-2019 academic year. Descriptive statistics means, standard deviations, and correlational analysis (Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient) and an independent samples t-test (2-tailed) were used to analyze the data. The study found that Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School was moderately low and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was slightly low. Also, a significant positive relationship between motivation and perception of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was found for each grade levels. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that there was no significant difference between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language, and no significant difference between their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language as well. Recommendations for school, teachers, students, parents and future researchers are provided.

Keywords: Motivation, Perceived Parental Encouragement, English as a Foreign Language, Socio-Educational Model, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), Maija Yang High School

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Introduction

English is an important language for international communication. It is considered as one of the global languages in the fields of business, education, politics, and entertainment (Crystal, 2003). In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), English is used as the medium of communication for regional cooperation among the member countries (Cheng, 2012). Myanmar is a member of ASEAN and the current broad objective of Myanmar education is first to catch up with the education standards of the ASEAN region and then to attain quality global education, which is an international standard to develop the human resources needed for economic development of the state (Paw, 2015). However, while the goal is for students in Myanmar to have high English proficiency skills, most of them lack communicative competency in English, although it is taught as a core compulsory subject from kindergarten to university (Soe, 2015).

In order to fully understand and to help the students' improvement in learning English, motivation and parental encouragement are important factors for language learning activities. According to Bernard (2010), Fostering positive students' motivation can lead to significant improvement in language education. Parental encouragement influences language achievement and supports motivation (Gardner, 2009). Therefore, the researcher decided to investigate the level of Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation and perceptions of parental encouragement at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar and to determine whether there was a relationship between those variables in each grade. Moreover, this study compared the level of students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for each grade based on Gardner's socio-educational model.

Research Objectives

The following are the research objectives addressed by this study.

1. To determine the level of Grade 10 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
2. To determine the level of Grade 10 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
3. To determine the level of Grade 11 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
4. To determine the level of Grade 11 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.

5. To determine if there is a significant relationship between Grade 10 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
6. To determine if there is a significant relationship between Grade 11 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
7. To determine if there is a significant difference between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
8. To determine if there is a significant difference between Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.

Theoretical Framework

This research was based on Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (2010).

Socio-Educational Model. In the field of second/foreign language learning motivation, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition is one of the most dominant and productive models. Since it was initially developed by Gardner and his colleagues in the early 1970s, the model has been refined in a great many research studies over the years and become one of the most well-known and largely accepted theories in the language learning area (Gardner, 2010). Moreover, it has been tested with students learning English as a foreign language in many countries and proven to be valid and consistent (Gardner, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study, describing graphically the research site, as well as the two research variables addressed in this study. Students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language serves as the independent variable, and students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language serves as the dependent variable for the present study.

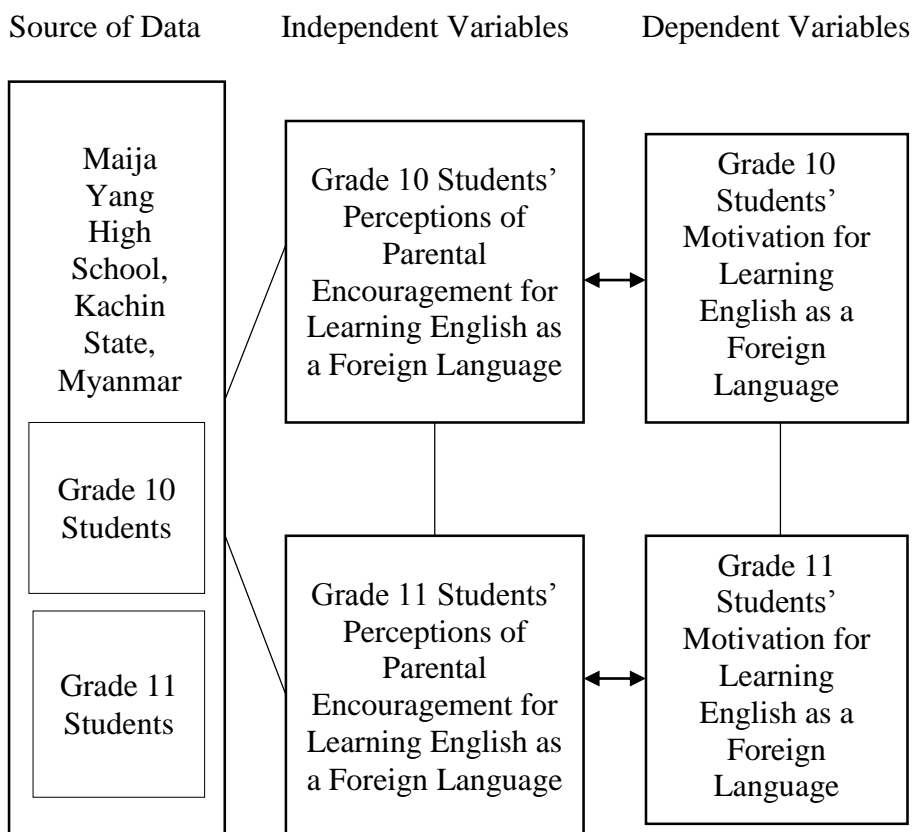


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Literature Review

The Role of Motivation in Second or Foreign language learning

The success or failure in learning a foreign language is directly associated with an individual's motivation. It is an important and dominant factor which strongly influences learning second/foreign language. Alizadeh (2016) noted that the success of any foreign language learning is due to the fact of motivation. With the right motivation, a learner can overcome any difficulties that they face in foreign language learning. For second/foreign language learners, motivation is a vital part of mastering a foreign language because only students with sufficient motivation can learn effectively. Due to insufficient motivation, obstacles and difficulties may appear for the learners. Therefore, Varisoglu (2018) stated that truly motivated learners are willing to learn a second/foreign language by putting in effort to engage in the necessary learning activities when they accept accountability for their own learning.

Students need to have adequate motivation for their learning because it can provide the primary push to initiate learning and help sustain the long-term process of learning. It has been suggested that a motivated individual has a strong desire and enjoyment for language learning, and so expends effort to learn the language (Gardner, 2001).

The Importance of Perceived Parental Encouragement in Second or Foreign Language Learning

Parents are the primary influencers in children's development and the achievement of success in their lives. Their encouragement is one of the major features for children's language learning and it encourages them to do well in the learning process. For second/foreign language learning, parental encouragement is an essential factor for young children to succeed (Gardner, 1985a). It directly relates to the students' language achievement and strongly supports their motivation (Gardner, 2007, 2009). The active role of parental support for their children's second/foreign language learning is significantly associated with their motivation (Kishor, 2014). Moreover, support from parents will encourage children to make progress in learning. For instance, showing their love and verbalizing their support will have positive effects on the children's academic performance.

Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 2004)

The international version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 2004), written in English was developed for measuring the five variables of learning English as a foreign language namely Integrativeness, Attitudes toward the Learning Situation, Motivation, Language Anxiety, Instrumentality and parental encouragement as an additional social variable. The development of the international version was mainly aimed at secondary school students learning English as a foreign language. The AMTB has demonstrated significant internal consistency reliability. It has been widely used in the second language learning research area and modified by many researchers around the world (Gardner, 1985b).

Methodology/Procedure

Population and Sample

The total number of students in this research was 265, 120 students from Grade 10 and another 145 students from Grade 11 at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar during the academic year of 2018-2019. All the students (265 students) from Grades 10 and 11 were considered as the sample in this study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument of was the Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement in Learning English Skills Questionnaire. It was an adapted version of the international Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) for English as a foreign language (Gardner, 2004). It consisted of 38 items that assessed the students' levels of motivation for learning English as a foreign language and the students' levels of perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language. The questionnaire used a 7-point Likert scale with 1 (*strongly disagree*) representing the lowest score and 7 (*strongly agree*) as the highest score.

The quantitative data collected was analyzed by using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and statistical hypothesis testing (correlational analysis (Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient) and an independent samples *t*-test (2-tailed)) in order to address this research objectives and hypotheses.

The interpretation key for motivation for learning English, motivational intensity, desire to learn English, attitudes toward learning English, and perceived parental encouragement subscales for learning English as a foreign language are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Score Interpretation for Motivation for Learning English, Motivational Intensity, Desire to Learn English, Attitudes Toward Learning English, and Perceived Parental Encouragement Subscales*

Scales	Interpretation					
	Very low	Moderately low	Slightly low	Slightly high	Moderately high	Very high
Motivation for learning English	30.00 - 60.00	60.01 - 90.00	90.01 - 120.00	120.01 - 150.00	150.01 - 180.00	180.01 - 210.00
Motivational Intensity	10.00 - 20.00	20.01 - 30.00	30.01 - 40.00	40.01 - 50.00	50.01 - 60.00	60.01 - 70.00
Desire to learn English	10.00 - 20.00	20.01 - 30.00	30.01 - 40.00	40.01 - 50.00	50.01 - 60.00	60.01 - 70.00
Attitudes toward learning English	10.00 - 20.00	20.01 - 30.00	30.01 - 40.00	40.01 - 50.00	50.01 - 60.00	60.01 - 70.00
Perceived parental encouragement	8.00 - 16.00	16.01 - 24.00	24.01 - 32.00	32.01 - 40.00	40.01 - 48.00	48.01 - 56.00

Findings/Results

The findings of the study are according to the research objectives.

Research Objective 1

Table 2 shows Grade 10 students' levels of motivation for learning English as a foreign language and motivation subscale variables: motivational intensity to learn English, desire to learn English and attitude toward learning English respectively.

Table 2. *Grade 10 Students' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the Motivation Variable and Subscales (N=120)*

Motivation subscales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Motivational intensity to learn English	29.5	6.05	Moderately low
Desire to learn English	22.9	7.02	Moderately low
Attitude toward learning English	23.9	6.77	Moderately low
Motivation for learning English	76.3	19.84	Moderately low

Table 2 shows that Grade 10 students' total mean score of motivation for learning English as a foreign language was 76.3, which was interpreted as moderately low. Their mean scores for the three subscales, motivational intensity to learn English, desire to learn English and attitude toward learning English were 29.5, 22.9 and 23.9 respectively. The mean scores of these subscales were interpreted as moderately low.

Research Objective 2

Table 3 shows Grade 10 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 3. *Grade 10 Students' Mean Score and Standard Deviation for the Level of Perception of Parental Encouragement for Learning English as a Foreign Language Variable (N=120)*

Grade level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Grade 10	26.5	8.46	Slightly low

Table 3 shows that Grade 10 students' level of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was 26.5. It was interpreted as slightly low.

Research Objective 3

Table 4 shows Grade 11 students' levels of motivation for learning English as a foreign language and motivation subscale variables: motivation intensity to

learn English, desire to learn English and attitude toward learning English, respectively.

Table 4. Grade 11 Students' Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for the Motivation Variable and Subscales (N=145)

Motivation subscales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Motivational intensity to learn English	31.0	7.14	Slightly low
Desire to learn English	23.4	8.17	Moderately low
Attitude toward learning English	25.3	8.37	Moderately low
Motivation for learning English	79.7	23.68	Moderately low

Table 4 shows that Grade 11 students' total mean score of motivation for learning English as a foreign language was 79.7, which was interpreted as moderately low. Their mean score for the subscale motivational intensity to learn English, 31.0, was interpreted as slightly low. Their mean scores for the subscales desire to learn English and attitude toward learning English were 23.4 and 25.3, respectively. The mean scores of these two subscales were interpreted as moderately low.

Research Objective 4

Table 5 shows Grade 11 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 5. *Grade 11 Students' Mean Score and Standard Deviation for the Level of Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for Learning English as a Foreign Language Variable (N=145)*

Grade level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Grade 11	28.1	10.2	Slightly low

Table 5 shows that Grade 11 students' level of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was 28.1. It was interpreted as slightly low.

Research Objective 5

Table 6 shows correlation between Grade 10 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 6 *Correlation between Grade 10 Students' Motivation and Their Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for Learning English as a Foreign Language*

Variable	1	2
1. Parental Encouragement	-	-
2. Motivation for Learning English	.311** (.001)	-

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). $N = 120$.

Table 6 shows that the correlation was .311 ($r = .311$) and the significance value was .001, which was smaller than .01 significance level. It indicated that there was a significant, moderate, and positive relationship between Grade 10 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Research Objectives 6

Table 7 shows correlation between Grade 11 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 7. *Correlation between Grade 11 Students' Motivation and Their Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for Learning English as a Foreign Language*

Variable	1	2
1. Parental Encouragement	-	-
2. Motivation for Learning English	.223** (.007)	-

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). $N = 145$.

Table 7 shows that the correlation was .223 ($r = .223$) and the significance value was .007, which was smaller than .01 significance level. It indicated that there was a significant, weak, and positive relationship between Grade 11 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Research Objective 7

Table 8 shows the comparison between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 8. *Comparison between Grades 10 and 11 Students' Motivation for Learning English as a Foreign Language*

Grade	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Grade 10	120	76.3	19.84	-1.44	263	.15
Grade 11	145	79.7	23.68			

As seen in Table 8, the independent samples *t*-test (2-tailed) results revealed there was no significant difference between motivation of Grade 10 ($M = 76.3$, $SD = 19.84$) and Grade 11 ($M = 79.7$, $SD = 23.68$) learning English as foreign language $t(263) = -1.44$, $p = .15$ at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.

Research Objective 8

Table 9 shows the comparison between Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language.

Table 9. *Comparison between Grades 10 and 11 Students' Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for Learning English as a Foreign Language*

Grade	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	Sig.(2-tailed)
Grade 10	120	26.5	8.46	-1.34	263	.18
Grade 11	145	28.1	10.2			

As seen in Table 9, the independent samples *t*-test (2-tailed) results revealed that there was no significant difference between students' perceptions of parental encouragement of Grade 10 ($M = 26.5$, $SD = 8.46$) and Grade 11 ($M = 28.1$, $SD = 10.2$) learning English as foreign language $t(263) = -1.34$, $p = .18$ at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.

Discussion

The Levels of Grades 10 and 11 Students' Motivation for Learning English as a Foreign Language at Maija Yang High School

The findings of this study revealed that Grades 10 and 11 students from Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar had a moderately low level of motivation for learning English as a foreign language. An individual's level of motivation for learning a foreign language is related to their achievement in learning that language. Therefore, motivation, along with ability, is considered by Gardner the most important factor in language learning. (Alizadeh, 2016; Gardner, 2010).

According to the researcher's teaching experience at this school, the researcher presumed that there were two possible reasons why students from Maija Yang High School were not highly motivated for learning English as a foreign language. The first reason was that Maija Yang High School does not have enough resources such as internet access, projectors, smartboards, and good library with a variety of books for learning English. The school cannot afford a good learning environment for the students. For English language teaching, those kinds of material support are very important not only for the teachers but also for the students. Therefore, Makrami (2010) stated that classroom instruction must be composed of effective teaching and interactive materials that help the students to learn actively and effectively and lead teachers to attain better outcomes.

The second reason for Grades 10 and 11 students' moderately low motivation for learning English as a foreign language was the location of the Maija Yang village. In Maija Yang, very few people use English in their daily lives, e.g., people who work as interpreters for the KIO governors and people who teach English language at the Institute of Education in Maija Yang. Students do not have the chance to practice English after class. Moreover, it is very close to China and it is the second biggest border trading area under the KIO controlled area. Chinese language is spoken as a business language there. According to Gardner (1985a), in his fundamental model of language learning, the third stage of the model concerns the context where the target language is acquired. He stated that it can be a formal language learning context as in the classroom setting or an informal language experience where students interact with the second/foreign language in daily life or within the community (Gardner, 1985a). The researcher suspected the two reasons above are probably why the researcher found that Grades 10 and 11 students from Maija Yang High School were not highly motivated to learn English.

The Levels of Grades 10 and 11 Students' Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for learning English as a Foreign Language at Maija Yang High School

Jeynes (2003) stated that when students get support and encouragement from their parents, they are stimulated and motivated to do well in language learning. However, the findings of this study revealed that Grades 10 and 11 students from Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar, perceived a slightly low level of support and encouragement from their parents in their learning English as a foreign language. Grades 10 and 11 students from Maija Yang High School need effective positive encouragement from their parents to motivate them through their language learning process. According to the researcher's working experience at this school, the possible reasons could be

that parents are working almost every day to survive, and they have no chance to be involved in their children's studying. Moreover, almost all parents were not educated, and some parents had not finished even primary school. The majority of parents did not speak English and they were not comfortable with the English language. They did not know how to encourage, care, and offer active guidance and support to their children's English language learning. Kishor (2014) suggested that the level of students' language learning motivation is highly correlated with the level of parents' active support and involvement and that previous finding supports the need of the students in the current study to have more parental encouragement for their study.

Grades 10 and 11 Students' Motivation and their Perceptions of Parental Encouragement for learning English as A Foreign Language

The findings of this current study demonstrated that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School. This study finding was in line with many previous studies that have shown parental encouragement is a crucial factor and it generates students' motivational characteristics for learning a second/foreign language (Contreras & Lynch, 2018; Hou & Lynch, 2016; Huang & Lynch, 2019; Paran & Tibli, 2009; Penjak & Karninčić, 2015). Parents can play either an active or passive role in the language learning process of their children (Gardner, 1985b). In 2009, Paran and Tibli conducted a study to investigate Philippines college students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English. The study found that there was a significant relationship between the level of students' English language learning motivation and their perceived parental encouragement to learn English language. The study also indicated that the importance of parents' encouragement in their children's motivation for second/foreign language learning and learning motivation was highly associated with the amount of encouragement that they received from their parents (Paran & Tibli, 2009).

Another study also related to the students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language among university students was conducted by Penjak and Karninčić (2015) at university in Split, Croatia. The study also found that there was a significant relationship between students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language. However, in the study, the students were investigated according to gender. The result showed that male students were more interested and active in learning English than

female students when they received effective support and encouragement from their parents.

Previous studies done by Hou and Lynch (2016) and Huang and Lynch (2019) also investigated students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragements for learning Chinese as a foreign language. They targeted their studies to primary students at a Bilingual School in Bangkok and an international school in Bangkok. In their studies, they also found that primary students' Chinese language learning motivation and the encouragement that they received from their parents were significantly correlated. Hou & Lynch (2016) stated that parents played a very essential position in their child's development. Again, Gardner (1985b) also suggested that parents can play both an active or a passive role in their children's language learning process. Moreover, another study related to students' motivation and their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was conducted in Bangkok by Contreras and Lynch (2018). The study findings also revealed that the two variables had a statistically significant positive relationship. For the foreign language learners, parents' active support and encouragement were crucial to their language learning process. In addition, the success of second/foreign language learning, it is a necessary factor especially for young second/foreign language learners (Gardner, 1985a).

Furthermore, the findings of this current study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference not only between Grades 10 and 11 students' motivation but also their perceptions of parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language at Maija Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar. According to the findings, they had the same level of motivation for learning English as a foreign language and they clearly received the same amount of encouragement from their parents for learning English as a foreign language. Based on the researcher's experience as a teacher at that school, the possible reasons for this finding could be that almost all students live in Maija Yang village and others lived in the local area. As students' parents were soldiers and farmers, they could not stimulate their children to be motivated learners in learning English as a foreign language. Also, they had been learning English as a foreign language at the same school and they had the same experiences with the limited learning resources. Gardner (2010) also stated that the curriculum, the teacher, the materials, and quality of instruction influence the individual's level of motivation to learn a second language. Moreover, they were influenced by the pervasive use of Chinese as a foreign, almost a second, language there.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this study will be directed to the following groups.

Recommendations for School

It is highly recommended that the school should provide professional development training to the teachers in order to improve their teaching ability and motivating strategies. Also, the classroom should be equipped with authentic learning materials such as projectors, smartboards, TVs, realia, photographs, artwork, postcards, product descriptions, and other available teaching/learning aids for the teachers and students.

Recommendations for Teachers

It is important for teachers to develop and apply a variety of activities using student-centered pedagogy for English language class in order to meet students' varied interests and learning preferences. Therefore, the researcher strongly recommends that teachers, instead of relying exclusively on traditional teacher-centered pedagogies, should apply interesting and fun student-centered activities: story-telling, group discussions, group and or individual presentations, group projects, language games and similar activities that incorporate student's interests, and hence elevate their motivation for learning, while giving them practice in developing meaningful English communication skills.

Recommendations for Students

With the help of teachers, the school, parents, and the community, they will receive positive support for learning English. This will help them know their strengths and weaknesses and assist them in making required attitude changes to achieve success in learning English as a foreign language.

Recommendations for Parents

It is crucial that parents realize that through their active guidance and effective encouragement, their children can be motivated to become successful English language learners. They should provide on-going active encouragement and support throughout the learning process. Therefore, it is recommended that they should continually show their interests and willingness to be involved with their children's English language learning.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

It is recommended that future researchers conduct studies exploring these variables on other subjects such as Myanmar language, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and social sciences. For the future researchers who want to focus on English language learning, they should include all four macro

skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing as well as academic achievement in learning English as variables of interest. Moreover, future research should be conducted to investigate the effects of motivation and parental encouragement on students' academic achievement on various subjects at various grade levels in various schools throughout Myanmar.

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